

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Mr. & Mrs. John P. Bullington House

AGENDA ITEM: E

OWNERS: Mr. Michael Mahlstedt

HPO FILE NO.: 20PL187

APPLICANTS: same

DATE ACCEPTED: 11/16/2020

LOCATION: 3023 Del Monte Drive, River Oaks, Houston, Texas

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 1, Block 31, River Oaks Section 1, Harris County, Houston, Texas 77019.

The site includes a single-family, two and a half story 6,568 square foot home built in 1938 on a 26,775 square foot lot. The lot is 125 feet by 210 feet and is located on the north side of Del Monte Drive.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Protected Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The John Perry Bullington House was designed by prolific Houston architect Birdsall P. Briscoe for Mr. Bullington and his wife Mrs. Frankie Carroll Bullington. The design of the home paid tribute to the LeCarpentier-Beauregard-Keyes House, a Greek Revival-style raised cottage built in New Orleans' French Quarter in 1826. In his *Houston Architectural Guide*, architectural historian Stephen Fox states that Briscoe "suburbanized the original without sacrificing its neo-Classical dignity."

John Bullington was a prominent Houston attorney who argued many cases before the U.S. Supreme Court during his successful career as a litigator at Baker, Botts, Parker and Garwood.

Mrs. Frankie Carroll Bullington was the granddaughter of W.T. Carter, a wealthy Houston entrepreneur who founded the W.T. Carter Lumber and Building Company. Her mother, Lena Carter Carroll, purchased the lot at 3023 Del Monte as a gift for her daughter in 1936. Birdsall Briscoe had a longstanding professional association with the Carroll and Carter families dating from 1915, and designed homes for Mrs. Bullington and her two sisters.

The Bullington House at 3023 Del Monte meets criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for Landmark Designation and criteria 1 for Protected Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

River Oaks

River Oaks is adjacent to Buffalo Bayou and Memorial Park in west central Houston. Development in the residential garden suburb, which comprises 1,100 acres, began in the 1920s through the foresight and persistence of brothers Will Hogg (1875-1930) and Mike Hogg (1885-1941), and attorney Hugh Potter (1888-1968). The nucleus of the expansive subdivision predates the Hoggs' and Potter's involvement. By 1924, Country Club Estates, the section south of the newly established River Oaks Country Club, had been platted, but not developed. The Hogg brothers bought out the original investors and established Country Club Estates, Inc., later renamed the River Oaks Corporation.

Mike Hogg's friend, Hugh Potter, was installed as president of the corporation. Under his expert direction, the development of River Oaks began in earnest. Not only was the existing section developed, the corporation also busily acquired land on all sides of the original Country Club Estates. Between 1926 and 1947, an additional nineteen platted subdivisions were joined to River Oaks.

A study of noteworthy American suburban communities, particularly Roland Park in Baltimore and the Country Club District in Kansas City, was responsible for such innovative ideas as the institution of architectural controls in River Oaks, the levying of a private tax to support a maintenance and services fund, and the creation of a property owners' association to enforce deed restrictions. Will Hogg was especially determined that River Oaks serve as a model of enlightened community planning standards for Houston. He retained Kansas City landscape architects Hare & Hare to provide a master plan that would protect the environmental integrity and natural beauty of the area.

The developers also hired J. C. Nichols, who built Kansas City's Country Club Plaza, one of the first major shopping centers in the United States, to serve as a design consultant. The River Oaks master plan included home sites, a fifteen-acre campus for River Oaks Elementary School (1926, Harry D. Payne), two shopping centers, and esplanades planted with flowers. The plan called for underground utility lines, eliminated alleys, allowed only three intersecting streets and provided rigid building codes. Deed restrictions and centralized community control assured exclusivity; approval of house designs by a panel of architects and citizens and a minimum purchase price of \$7,000 were required. One restriction stated that no property could be conveyed to any person who was not of the Caucasian race, although that provision was removed when the restrictions were renewed in 1985.

On March 15, 1926, the subdivision's developers announced a "Room for All Predevelopment Sale" for River Oaks: Section 1. An additional 134 lots were put on the market, nearly doubling the number of house sites offered in the original development. The lots in Block 40 on Skokie Drive (renamed Pelham Drive) served as the southern boundary of River Oaks. The general restrictions for the new tract required that single-family homes be at least two-stories tall with the exception of 13 lots in Block 40. The least expensive homes in Block 40 were to cost no less than \$7,500, while the price requirements on the remaining homes on Pelham Drive ranged from \$12,000 to \$18,000.

Birdsall P. Briscoe (b.6/10/1876, d.9/18/1971)

Birdsall P. Briscoe was born in Harrisburg, Texas on June 10, 1876. He was the son of Andrew Birdsall and Annie Frances (Paine) Briscoe, the grandson of Andrew Briscoe and the great grandson of John R. Harris, founder of Harrisburg, Texas. During the Spanish-American War, Briscoe served in the United States Army Infantry as a sergeant and later served as an army major during World War I. He was educated at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University), and the University of Texas, where he was a classmate of Will Hogg.

He began his architectural career in 1904 in Houston as an apprentice with architects Lewis Wilson and Lewis Sterling Green. During this time, the firm designed the original Blessed Sacrament Church (circa 1910), an East End landmark demolished in 2005. After a brief partnership with Green (1909-11), Briscoe started his own firm in 1912. He designed the W. L. Clayton house on Caroline Street in 1916 in

the Georgian Revival style and construction was completed in 1917. The house is now open to the public as the Clayton Genealogical Library and is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. From 1922 until 1926, Briscoe was in partnership with Sam H. Dixon, Jr. From 1919 until his retirement in 1955, Briscoe also shared an office with Maurice J. Sullivan. Although from time to time he collaborated with both Dixon and Sullivan on nonresidential commissions, Briscoe was best known for his elegantly composed and detailed houses.

Briscoe established his reputation as an exceptional designer at the outset of his career. His aptitude for disciplined formal composition and correct, scholarly rendition of historic detail placed him at the forefront of the eclectic trend in Houston architecture during the second decade of the twentieth century. Briscoe's finest houses, designed between 1926 and 1940, exhibit an array of historical architectural styles characteristic of American eclectic architecture and are distinguished by the architect's gift for harmonious proportion and full-bodied ornamental detail.

Briscoe worked extensively in the affluent Houston neighborhoods of Courtlandt Place, Shadyside, Broadacres and River Oaks. Among the clients for his residential projects were such prominent Houstonians as William Lockhart Clayton (1917), W. T. Carter (1920), R. Lee Blaffer (1920), Walter H. Walne (1925), Burdine Clayton Anderson (1928), Robert W. Wier (1928), Milton R. Underwood (1934), Wirt A. Paddock (1936), I. H. Kempner, Jr. (1936) and Dillon Anderson (1938). Outside Houston, Briscoe's best known project was the remodeling of the Patton-Varner House near West Columbia (now part of the Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Park) for Ima and William Clifford Hogg in 1920.

Briscoe married Ruth Dillman in 1927. He joined the American Institute of Architects in 1921 and was elected a fellow of the Institute in 1949. From 1934 until 1941, he served as district officer for South Texas of the Historic American Buildings Survey. He was the author of two western adventure novels, "In the Face of the Sun" (1934) and "Spurs from San Isidro" (1951). He was a parishioner at Christ Church (Episcopal). Briscoe died in Houston on September 18, 1971, and is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Goliad, Texas.

Birdsall Briscoe designed thirty-one houses in River Oaks. They include:

- 3376 Inwood Drive, *Clayton Summer House* (1924), National Register of Historic Places, 1984; City of Houston Landmark, 2006
- 3237 Inwood Drive, *William T. Campbell House* (1925), City of Houston Landmark, 2009
- 2950 Lazy Lane, *Dogwoods* (1928, demolished)
- 3015 Chevy Chase Drive, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1930)
- 2113 Bellmeade Road, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1931)
- 2920 San Felipe Road, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1931)
- 2929 Chevy Chase Drive, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1931)
- 2938 San Felipe Road, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1931)
- 3127 Avalon Place, *River Oaks Corp. speculative house* (1931)
- 3196 Del Monte Drive, *Harry L. Mott speculative house* (1931)
- 2923 Del Monte Drive, *Underwood House* (1934)
- 1829 Sharp Place, *Briscoe House #1* (1936)

- 3229 Chevy Chase Drive [also 3229 Groveland], *Paddock House* (1936), City of Houston Landmark, 2007
- 3401 Sleepyhollow Court, *Johnson House* (1936)
- 2227 Chilton Road, *Kempner House* (1937)
- 3249 Chevy Chase Drive, *Frost House* (1937)
- 3439 Del Monte Drive, *Pinckney House* (1937)
- 2308 River Oaks Blvd, *Fountain House* (1938)
- 3334 Chevy Chase Drive, *Wilson House* (1938)
- 3023 Del Monte Drive, *Bullington House* (1938)
- 3414 Del Monte Drive, *Anderson House* (1938), City of Houston Landmark, 2008
- 3425 Sleepyhollow Court, *McKallip House* (1938)
- 2317 Claremont Lane, *Briscoe House #2* (1939)
- 3707 Knollwood Drive, *White House* (with George W. Rustay, 1940)
- 3820 Willowick Road, *Davis House* (1940)
- 3434 Del Monte Drive, *Schneider House* (1941)
- 3880 Willowick Road, *Schuhmacher House* (1941)
- 3606 Knollwood Drive, *Britton House* (1942, demolished)
- 3601 Inverness Drive, *Hutcheson House* (1948)
- 3707 Inwood Drive, *Vaughan House* (1949)
- 3606 Chevy Chase Drive, *Austin House* (1951)
- 4019 Inverness Drive, *Dupree House "Legend"* (1959)

MR. JOHN P. BULLINGTON (b.4/12/1899-d.2/16/1948)

John Perry Bullington was born in Palisade, Colorado in 1899 and raised in Dallas, Texas. He studied law at the University of Texas, University of Paris and Yale University before joining the Houston firm of Baker, Botts, Parker and Garwood in 1925. During this time, the firm's offices were located on the 16th floor of the Niels Esperson building in downtown Houston. Baker Botts gained prominence by representing many of the railroad companies that were instrumental in Houston's early growth. Bullington became a partner in the firm in 1927 and argued many cases before the U.S. Supreme Court during his career. He was a director of several companies, including Union National Bank, Schlumberger Well Surveying Corporation, and the Texas & New Orleans Railroad. Mr. Bullington died when he was 48 and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery.

Following his marriage to Frankie Maude Carroll, and before the construction of their home on Del Monte Drive, Mr. and Mrs. Bullington lived with Mrs. Bullington's parents, Mr. James Judson (J.J.) Carroll and Mrs. Lena Carter Carroll at their family home on 16 Courtlandt Place.

Mrs. Carroll's father, William Thomas (W.T.) Carter was a prominent figure in Houston commerce in the early twentieth century. J.J. Carroll helped manage his father-in-law's business: W.T. Carter Lumber and Building Company. The firm was founded in 1909 and incorporated in 1910, becoming a successful enterprise with over 500 employees.

The construction of the Bullington's new home on Del Monte was a newsworthy item. An article in the Houston Chronicle entitled, "\$55,000 Residence is Being Built by Houston Lawyer" announced its construction. The brief article described some of the modern features of the house: "The house will be

frame. It will have plastered walls, a central heating system and be equipped for air conditioning. There is a basement and two porches.” The article also highlighted the home’s large size, “... it will contain 14 rooms and five baths. One room and bath on the third floor is for the maid. There is an apartment with bath for the other servants over a three-car garage.” Birdsall Briscoe is listed as the architect and W.J. Goggan as the contractor.

MRS. FRANKIE MAUDE CARROLL BULLINGTON (b.3/2/1904-d.7/25/1984)

Frankie Carroll was born in Camden, Polk County, Texas in March 1904. On December 27, 1926 she married John Bullington in Houston. Frankie Carroll Bullington was the granddaughter of lumberman W.T. Carter. Her father, James Judson Carroll was a manager at the Carter family lumber company. Frankie Carroll’s mother, Lena Carter Carroll, purchased the home site on 3023 Del Monte in River Oaks as gift for her daughter in 1936. The purchase price for the lot was \$8,500.

All three of the Carroll daughters, Mrs. Bullington, Mrs. Dillon Anderson, and Mrs. I.H. Kempner, lived in houses designed by Birdsall Briscoe.

In a 1980 interview, Mrs. Bullington explained that Briscoe had long wished to reproduce the LeCarpentier-Beauregard-Keyes House in New Orleans. Although Mrs. Bullington had originally wanted a Charleston-style house, she allowed Briscoe to realize his plans with a few alterations. By the 1930s, Briscoe had already demonstrated his ability to design homes using historical precedents. For example, in 1924, he completed a successful commission for W. L. Clayton with Mount Vernon as the model. The W.L. Clayton Summer House was designated a City of Houston Protected Landmark in 2007. The Clayton house is also listed on the National Register.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

Architectural Style – Greek Revival, Modeled after the Le Carpentier-Beauregard-Keyes House in New Orleans

In his *Houston Architectural Guide*, architectural historian, Stephen Fox states that Birdsall Briscoe “suburbanized the original [Le Carpentier House] without sacrificing its neo-Classical dignity,” when designing the Bullington House.

The Le Carpentier House was built in 1826 at 1113 Chartres Street in the French Quarter of New Orleans in the Greek Revival style with French Colonial influences. The house was designed by architect Francios Correjolle for wealthy auctioneer Joseph Le Carpentier. Through the years, the impressive residence was home to many prominent figures, including John Merle, Swiss Consul to New Orleans, and Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard. The author Frances Parkinson Keyes restored the house in the mid-twentieth century after it fell into disrepair. Since her death in 1970, the Keyes Foundation has maintained the property as a historic house museum and garden known as the Beauregard-Keyes House. The Le Carpentier-Beauregard-Keyes House is a designated National Historic Landmark.

By the 1930s, the French Eclectic architectural style was growing in popularity and had supplanted the Tudor Revival style in American suburbs. Birdsall Briscoe's home designs were at the forefront of the eclectic trend. His design for the Bullington house contains elements of the Greek Revival, French Eclectic and French Colonial styles.

In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia McAlester explains that the "symmetrical subtype" of the French Eclectic style typically includes a hipped roof and is dominated by a symmetrical façade with a centered entry. She elaborates that "façade detailing is usually rather formal, inspired by smaller French manor houses rather than grand chateaus or modest farmhouses." Wings are commonly added to the main structure.

French Colonial homes commonly have extensive porches supported by columns under the main roof line. Steeply pitched roofs are usually hipped. The buildings are raised on high masonry foundations, with porch areas supported by massive columns. Often the homes are raised a full story above grade to allow the main living area to escape potential floods.

Architectural Description

The Bullington house is a two-story structure with a single-story wing attached on the west side. The projecting central bay contains a formal central portico. There is one bay on either side. Like the LeCarpentier-Beauregard-Keyes House, plastered brick on the first floor is scored to simulate masonry. The upper story is sheathed in clapboard siding. A shingled, hipped roof covers the structure. There are exterior chimneys on the east and west sides of the house.

The recessed entry is centered on the first floor and contains a multi-paned glass front door with sidelights and transom. The door is flanked by two Tuscan columns. Small, symmetrically arranged two-over-four sash windows are on either side of the entry. Six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters are symmetrically arranged on the first floor of the east and west bays.

On the second floor, four Tuscan columns in a larger scale support a pediment decorated with prominent dentil molding. The tympanum contains a small glazed ocular window in the center. The second floor balcony is bordered by an ornamental iron railing. The second-story facade contains four large, symmetrically arranged six-over-nine sash windows with louvered shutters. Two windows are located on either side of a set of French doors. Under the portico, four simple pilasters are aligned with the columns of the portico.

The house has undergone no significant changes and has been maintained in excellent condition.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission
Department

Planning and Development

S	NA		S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.			
AND					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).			

Sec. 33-229. Criteria for protected landmark designation

S	NA		S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) Meets at least three of the criteria for designation in section 33-224 of this Code;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(2) Was constructed more than 100 years before application for designation was received by the director;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(3) Is listed individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; or			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(4) Is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark.			

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the [Full Name of Landmark Name] at [Address].

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends to City Council the Landmark Designation of the John P. Bullington House at 3023 Del Monte Drive

EXHIBIT A

PHOTO

MR. & MRS. JOHN P. BULLINGTON HOUSE
3023 DEL MONTE DRIVE



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission
Department

Planning and Development

EXHIBIT B SITE MAP MR. & MRS. JOHN P. BULLINGTON HOUSE 3023 DEL MONTE DRIVE

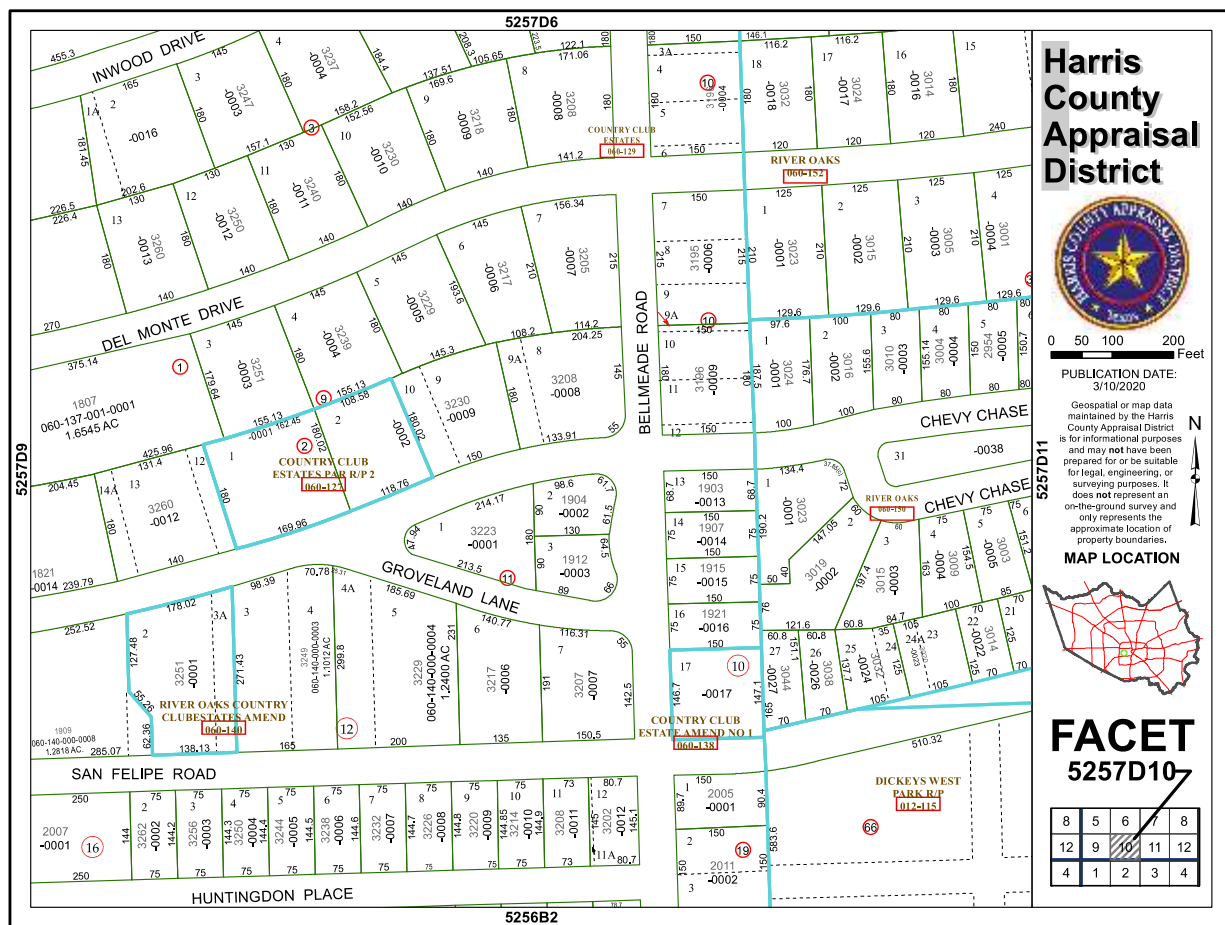


EXHIBIT C
3023 DEL MONTE
1966 SURVEY

